

Freetown Board of Assessors
Minutes of Wednesday, September 9, 2020
Virtual Meeting – Zoom.us

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2020 OCT -5 AM 9:49

E. Brown

Present: Jeff Field and Mike Motta.

Absent: Sue Parker.

Call to order: Mike Motta called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. The clerk then read a statement describing orders by the Governor suspending the Open Meeting Law and permitting the holding of meetings via remote participation during the coronavirus pandemic. Also, in conformance with these orders, all votes taken during this meeting were by roll call.

Approval of Minutes

- A motion was made by Mr. Field, seconded by Mr. Motta, to approve the minutes of August 19th. The motion carried unanimously.
- A motion was made by Mr. Field, seconded by Mr. Motta, to approve the minutes of the August 19th Executive Session, but not yet release the minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

Report of Assistant Assessor

The clerk provided an update on the status of Chapter 61A and Chapter 61B annual applications. This year, due to the pandemic, the applications were mailed out to the property owners rather than requiring them to come in to obtain them. About 50% have been returned to date (all are due October 1st).

As part of the annual renewal process, aerial photography is reviewed to ensure that the properties are being used appropriately for their class. This year, one property on High Street in the 61B Recreational program appeared to have two areas being used for incompatible uses. The Assessors reviewed the aerial photography and agreed that the area in question appeared incompatible. Specifically, an area of about 0.84 acre appeared to be used as a parking area for commercial equipment, and another area of about 2.96 acres near a cabin appeared to be in use for gravel mining of some sort. Mr. Motta stated the assessment must be fair and equitable, and that this use did not appear to be compatible. Mr. Field agreed that the specific areas mentioned appeared not to be compatible and should be denied. A motion was then made by Mr. Field, seconded by Mr. Motta, to disallow classification of 3.80 acres and allow the remainder of the property to remain classified. The motion carried unanimously. The property owner will be informed of the partial denial and provided information and forms for filing an appeal.

Any Other Business Properly Before the Board

The clerk reported that the Board of Selectmen did not support the request for additional funding for staffing, but did support additional funding to hire a consultant as had been done the year before. The Finance Committee followed suit. Mr. Field asked about contacting Ellen Blanchard to see if she would return. Mr. Motta agreed, and asked the clerk to contact Mrs. Blanchard to see if she would be available.

Executive Session

A motion was made by Mr. Field, seconded by Mr. Motta, to enter into executive session to comply with the provisions of any general or special law; specifically, to discuss Real Estate and Personal Property abatement

applications which are not open to public inspection (per M.G.L. Chapter 59, Section 60); to discuss Real Estate Tax Deferral applications which are not open to public inspection (per M.G.L. Chapter 59, Section 60); and to discuss strategy with respect to litigation where an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the town's litigating position – specifically, Marie's War Solar 1, LLC vs. Board of Assessors of the Town of Freetown, Braley Road Solar 4, LLC vs. Board of Assessors of the Town of Freetown, and SunRaise Investments, LLC vs. Board of Assessors of the Town of Freetown; and to return to open session afterward. When polled, the members voted as follows: Field – Aye, Motta – Aye, Parker – Absent.

Results of Executive Session

Results of decisions made were announced as follows:

One application for Real Estate Tax Deferral under Chapter 59, Section 41A, was denied due to the applicant exceeding the income threshold.

Meeting Adjourned

A motion was made by Mr. Field, seconded by Mr. Motta, to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

This is a True Record by me. Attest: _____, Assistant Assessor